



City Voice

July 2012

City of Caro
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THE MANAGER'S CORNER BY BRENT D. MORGAN



No Tax increases for Caro Residents

It's that time of year; no not summer but budget season. Every Spring the Caro City Council is presented with a budget for their consideration, a public hearing is held on the proposed budget and in June the budget is adopted.

The City is still feeling the effects of the economy, we've significantly tightened our belts, but are still surging forward with infrastructure improvements.

Property taxes and statutory revenue sharing, the city's major revenue sources, has continued to decline. Caro's decrease in revenues comes as no surprise; in preparation, costs have been cut during the current year and the upcoming adopted budget. The reductions that took place during the current year kept us out of trouble. Positions were not filled, overtime was reduced, and employee's paid for a larger portion of their health care.

During the current fiscal year the city was faced with state mandates which had to be met to continue to receive statutory revenue sharing. The City met these mandates by publishing the *Citizen's Guide and Dashboard*, modifying pension plans; modifying employee health coverage; and receiving credit for intergovernmental cooperation and consolidation.

The City of Caro's adopted budget is a tool which enables the City of Caro to keep the long-term perspective. The long term perspective is essential for our City if it is to continue to weather the current economic crises. We need to look past today's tough times and recognize that the changes we are making now may not always show results

for several years, perhaps long after terms of service of the elected officials and administrators have expired.

As a resident of Caro and member of the greater Caro Community I am inspired by those in the community that keep the long term view. They do not avoid the long term issues by adopting empty ordinances and resolutions to show some sort of action. Instead, they are not afraid to pursue goals and understand that gaining regional cooperation takes repeated outreach to build trust and building community facilities requires waiting for the right grant.

"Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air."

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS



CITY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
ON WEDNESDAY JULY 4, 2012

IN OBSERVANCE OF
INDEPENDENCE DAY

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A WORD FROM THE CLERK BY KAREN J



The upcoming Fiscal Year 2012/13 budget has been adopted by Council and year-end budget amendments are finished so it must be time to catch a break in the busy life as a City Clerk/Treasurer....or not. That is what I enjoy so much about my job.

There is never a dull moment.

In just a few days, if not already, City residents will receive their summer tax bills. The summer bill contains the State Education Tax, County Operating and City Operating millage. The City collects all taxes and returns the monies collected to those entities with the exception of the City Operating millage which is 16.1643 mills. That is the same millage levied for over 20 years. To avoid penalty fees, payment must be received in our office by 5 p.m. on September 17. If you have any questions regarding your taxes, please feel free to ask.

Two important election dates are right around the corner. August 7 is the Primary Election and November 6 is the General Election. Be sure to mark your calendar and don't forget to vote. There will be two new changes when you come to the polls in August. On May 11, 2012, Governor Snyder signed House Bill 4992 into law and it has been assigned Public Act 128 of 2012. One of the main changes you will see as a result of this new law is that it eliminates the requirement that instructions be printed on the ballot. The ballot instructions will be printed on the ballot secrecy sleeve or enclosed in a clear plastic pocket on the front of the ballot secrecy sleeve. In the past, the instructions appeared at the top of the ballot, sometimes making the ballot rather cumbersome. Hopefully you will like the change. The second change is the Bureau of Elections, through a grant paid for using Federal Help America Vote Act funds, provided the City of Caro with laptop computers and related accessories used for running the e-Pollbook which will be used for the August 7 election and thereafter. The e-Pollbook allows voters the ability to swipe their drivers license through a machine and the machine recognizes your information automatically while recording not what you voted but that you voted. By agreeing to use the e-Pollbook, the State also covers 50% of our annual equipment costs. If you do not have a drivers license, you can still vote by showing other qualifying picture identification.

MORE WITH LESS BY DICK POULIOT, MAYOR



More with Less

Please let me explain. Perhaps this would be more possible in the world of fashion than in any other area of life, but in this letter to our community of Caro the statement, "More with less," does not happen without its challenges and the commitment of logistics

("logistics," as defined by the

Oxford online dictionary as "the detailed coordination of a complex operation involving many people, facilities, or supplies.") One of the council's responsibilities is to have a vision for the future and plan for it. As Mayor and chair of your elected council, I have increased my personal reading time many fold in order to keep apprised of the latest developments and laws regarding government. In one article, there was a statement by State Senator Brandenburg that read, "It is about time the State's cities, townships and villages start to consolidate to cut costs. Michigan can no longer support 1,858 units of government." He went on to say, "It's just a fact."

The Senator's statement was in regard to the State legislators' plan to eliminate the Personal Property Tax in January 2013. The value of this tax to the City is approximately \$152k. Now, does this mean that ALL of that revenue is gone? No. But a portion will be gone next year and moving forward (around \$30k in our estimation) coupled with the loss of revenue sharing as we know it and declining taxable values, which is currently about 3% in the community. Next year it is being projected at about 3-4%, depending on what source is being referenced. Lansing, along with our Legislators, is telling us that we're going to get less - make your cuts accordingly! This raises the bar that much higher in providing the same level of services with less dollars coming into the city's accounts.

When I first read that statement by the Senator and the adjoining article, I thought about what cuts we are now going to propose to balance the city's budget. The city has approximately seven less staff than a few years ago, decreased spending in a number of programs as well as making upgrades to decrease energy use. So, my question is, "What can we do next to operate with less dollars?" At this point, we will have to consider increased collaboration between government units, such as the one where we share our assessing with the County,

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and having a recreation agreement with Cass City Parks and Recreation. Therefore, to continue the decreasing cost of our government and strive to maintain the same level of service WITHOUT raising our taxes is "more with less."

Moving on to some of the positive things occurring in Caro...the largest being the West Sherman Street Project and improvements in the street as well as in the water and sewer system. We are able to accomplish this through the use of State and Federal dollars along with monies collected from water and sewer fees and General Fund, respectively. I'm looking forward to seeing both the completion of this project and seeing you along in the progress of it. We were also able to budget for a new police car and DPW plow truck, improvements which will also lend themselves to improved services to the community.

In closing, this is prime time in summer; let's get out there and enjoy Caro together!

CARO FIRE DEPARTMENT BY CHIEF RANDY HECKROTH



We are now at the beginning of summer here in Michigan, and with the Fourth of July just around the corner I would like to address some questions about the new Fireworks Law

Although some, not all, air borne fireworks are now legal in Michigan; everyone still needs to practice safe handling. Please be aware of where it might land and the conditions around it. Keep all children supervised and away from launch areas.

Legal fireworks are usually in bright colorful wrapping, with the note stating "Consumer Use." Anything else may require a license to set off.

Be aware of any local City or Township ordinances that may prohibit any use of air borne fireworks. This may include a noise ordinance after certain hours. Be mindful that careless use can result in being responsible for any bills, or injuries relating to your use of fireworks. Questions concerning any use of fireworks can be addressed to me through the Fire Department at 989-673-2002.

Please have a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT BY CURTIS WELLS WWTP SUPERINTENDENT

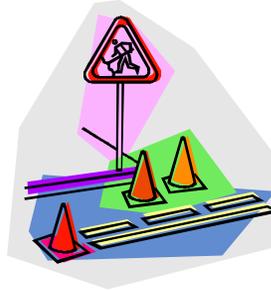


The Caro Area Wastewater Treatment Plant staff are proud and happy to serve the residents of our community. Summer has arrived and was considerably early. For safety reasons please keep your eyes and ears open for our futures that are now out of school and enjoying our community.

Our wastewater system is currently having issues with customers who are apparently flushing the Swiffer sweeper type towels and moist towel wipes. These types of cleaning products are not made to enter the sanitary sewers because they are not able to disperse or disintegrate like toilet paper is. This issue is causing pumps to clog in our lift stations. We would like to ask all of our customers to please help us in complying with our sewer use ordinance, by not putting these products in our sewer system.

And as always, during the summer, the RV dump at the plant is open from 7 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation, and have a great and safe summer.

PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS BY CHARLIE SUNDBLAD DPW SUPERINTENDENT



Summer is off to a good start with the weather. The City is hoping to start on the continuation of the Chippewa Trail this summer. The West Sherman Street project is on schedule to start construction in early September of this year.

Also, the water department will be updating the city's water reliability study. This is done every five years and helps us in planning out future water projects and updates. Remember that the City does not allow raking or putting of grass clippings in the street gutters. Please put them in a container marked with an "X" and the garbage company will take them. Also, please remember that when you see someone working in the roadway to please take extra caution when driving around them. We at the DPW are doing our best to keep up with all of everything that we do. We may take a little longer than before but we will get there.

CARO POLICE DEPARTMENT BY CHIEF BRIAN NEWCOMB

Caro Police Department wishes everyone a happy and safe summer. There are a couple of new laws now in effect....

New concealed pistol law now allows CPL holders to also carry a taser made for civilian use. Attached is an article from WNEM...

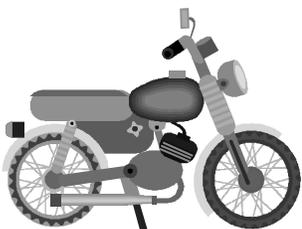
Michigan residents trained and licensed to carry concealed pistols will be able to possess and use an electro-muscular disruption device under legislation approved Wednesday by the House.

An EMD is defined as a device that delivers a shock through probes attached to wires and is commonly known as a stun gun or the brand name Taser.

In addition to allowing a CPL holder to use a stun gun, the bills also authorize reserve peace officers for its use during the performance of official duties and allow court officers to carry a concealed pistol or stun gun in a no-carry zone.

The general statewide ban on non-licensed individuals possessing, using or selling a stun gun, as well as any other device that delivers an electric current, impulse, wave or beam designed to temporarily incapacitate, injure or kill, remains in place.

The penalty for unlawful stun gun use is set as a two-year misdemeanor charge. SBs 29 and 30 now return to the Senate for consideration.



Recently, the Governor signed into law a bill that allows Motorcycle operators to be able to ride without a helmet. Public Act 257.658 takes immediate effect. It says:

A motorcycle operator is not required to wear a helmet IF all of the following apply...

- *The operator is at least 21 years old
- *The operator has had his or her motorcycle endorsement for at least 2 years OR has successfully passed a motorcycle safety course conducted according to MCL 257.811A or B
- *The operator has in effect a security for the first-party medical benefits payable if he or she is involved in a motorcycle crash for at least \$20,000 for the operator or \$20,000 per person if the operator is carrying an additional passenger and the passenger does not have at least \$20,000 security.

A motorcycle passenger is not required to wear a crash helmet if all of the following conditions apply...

- *The passenger is at least 21 years old
- *The passenger has in effect at least a \$20,000 security for the first party medical benefits payable if he or she is involved in a motorcycle accident or the operator of the motorcycle has in effect a security that covers the operator and the passenger for at least \$20,000 per person.

**MCL 257.658 does not require a motorcycle operator to carry proof that he or she has possessed a motorcycle endorsement for at least two years or has successfully passed the motorcycle safety course.

Additional, the law does not require a motorcycle operator or passenger carry proof of the \$20,000 security required to operate or ride a motorcycle without a helmet.



ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT BY JERRY THORP



Summer is here and with it dry weather conditions that contribute to the GROWTH OF WEEDS. The City of Caro's noxious weeds/grass ordinance requires your compliance in maintaining the growth of grass and weeds at less than 8 inches.

Since May 1st, City contractors have been called in to correct more than 100 lawns in violation of the City's noxious weeds/grass ordinance. Owners of these properties are billed for the cost of the mowing plus an administrative fee of \$20. Some of these lawns have been mowed several times.

With regular maintenance of our yards we are helping to maintain the beauty of Caro while property owners are saving money in the long run.

I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please feel free to stop in or call with any questions. I am available on Tuesday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 989-673-1373.

THE CARO GARDEN CLUB BY PETER DILLER



The objective of the Caro Garden Club is to stimulate the knowledge and love for gardening among amateurs. We strive to develop the artistic use of all kinds of flowers and vegetations to aid in the conservation of soil, native trees, flowers and birds all while promoting a helpful spirit of community fellowship. We have nine (9) monthly presentations scheduled in July 2012 - June 2013 time period. The public is cordially invited at no charge. Lunch is served at 12 noon and the meeting follows afterward.

- July 25, 2012: Cooking with spices from India
By Sudha Kumar, Member
- Aug 29, 2012: Growing, caring and using Herbs
By Jackie Earley, Herbal Society
- Sept 26, 2012: Thomas Jefferson Gardens
By MariAnn Saenen, Member
- Oct 31, 2012: (Garden) Tool Time
By Linda Mason, Member
- Nov 14, 2012: Holiday Designs, Swags
By Kim Swistoski, Member
- Jan 30, 2013: Dehydrating your Garden surplus
By Joel Swistoski, Member
- Mar 27, 2013: Shrubs and Bushes Care
By Jim Begick, Begick Nursery
- April 24, 2013: Pruning of Fruit Trees
By Peter Diller, Member
- June 26, 2013: Vanilla care and use
By Diana Bondy, Member

We only ask that we be called 48 hours in advance to ensure ample lunch is prepared. Please call:

Kim Swistoski - 810.272.8597
Sue Nearing - 989.823.3607
Diana Bondy - 989.683.2123
Peter Diller - 989.672.0714

THE CARO HISTORICAL COMMISSION BY MARK R. PUTNAM

Below is a picture of the porch at the Caro Roadhouse Museum. During the warm weather months I spend time down at the Museum working in the garden, painting, and figuring out what holds true for the future at the Museum. This last year a newspaper article from about 1913 arose that has information that is new. It indicates that the Caro Roadhouse was once the Peter Dewitt Bush Home and was once located on Caro's Hill Top near the north end of Almer Street. Today the building is located at the south



end of Almer Street. Peter D. Bush purchased the house it appears from his father-in-law Samuel P. Sherman who would have been the first owner. The Caro Roadhouse was by nearly all accounts Caro's first house. When working on the Roadhouse it comes

to my mind that I am very lucky to have such a privilege. To be in the actual home that was once the home of Caro's two founding fathers is indeed to me a privilege.

During the warm weather the Caro Roadhouse Museum will be open on Thursdays from 5 to 7 PM and during Caro's major events such as the Caro Cars, Crafts, and Bikes Week-end, the Tuscola County Fair, and the Tuscola Pumpkin Festival. We also have organized a Tuscola Historical Museum Circle Tour with help from other Tuscola County historical groups both public and private.

Money that is used to maintain and improve the Caro Roadhouse Museum comes from the City of Caro budget. We are very thankful for the direction and dedication that our City Council members have provided to the Museum. If it was not for them and past members, the Museum would have passed from history as just another written memory, but it is today a living memory. We invite you to visit the Museum, and because of limited funds we also invite you to make a contribution or donation to the Museum. The Caro Historical Commission would like the Museum to be a self-supporting enterprise or entity. With your help by providing support this memory of Caro's past will endure into the future. Our goal is not to have the greatest number of visitors but to have preserved the history and memory of Caro's first house or home. If you want an inspiration I invite everyone to visit the Caro Roadhouse Museum. It stands today as one of the most interesting and inspiring buildings in Michigan's Thumb.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



The original business was founded by Kyle’s father in Port Hope over 30 years ago and still operates in Port Hope. Kyle is the co-owner of the Caro store with his father located at 837 S. State Street. They specialize in HVAC/R & Green Energy. They service and repair all brands and carry a wide variety of supplies.

SUMMER 2012 CARO/CASS CITY PARKS AND RECREATION

To register or with any question contact us at 989-673-5510 or carocasscityparks@live.com. All registration is to be held at McComb Elementary School, 303 N Hooper, Caro MI 48723, office hours Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (All aquatic activities are provided by Caro Community Schools)

Tennis Camp – Aug 13-17
8 a.m. - 10 a.m. at the Fairgrounds



Golf Camp – July 30-Aug 3
8 a.m. - 10 a.m. at Arrowhead and Caro Golf Courses

Boys Basketball Camp – July 23-27
6:00-8:00 p.m. at Caro High School



Day Camp – Starting June 18-Aug 17
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. for eight weeks at McComb Elementary

Tiny Tots - Starting June 18-Aug 17
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. for eight weeks at McComb Elementary



Tiny Tikes Sports Camp – Aug 6-10 with a different sport every day! 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Fairgrounds



Rocket Camp – July 23-25 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. at Fairgrounds



American Red Cross Level Swim Lessons - Starting June 18-Aug 31. Every Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-10 a.m., 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Each session is 1 hour/five days, 8 weeks available. All instructors are American Red Cross Certified.

Parent and Child Aquatics – July 31-Aug 28 Every Tuesday from 5:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m. at Caro Schools Pool. All instructors are American Red Cross Certified.

Swim Camp – July 9-13 8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Caro Schools Pool



Bowling Camp—July 9-13 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. at Brentwood Bowling Alley, lunch provided daily!



Majestic Outdoor Family Movie Night— July 13, and Aug 18 at 8:45 p.m. at the Downtown Park.



CITY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED
ON MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 3, 2012
IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR DAY

UPCOMING MEETINGS

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Council | July 2 & 16 | 7:30 p.m. |
| | Aug 6 & 20 | 7:30 p.m. |
| | Sept 4 & 17 | 7:30 p.m. |
| Planning | July 10 & 24 | 7:00 p.m. |
| | Aug 14 & 28 | 7:00 p.m. |
| | Sept 11 & 25 | 7:00 p.m. |
| DDA | July 11 | Noon |
| | Aug 8 | Noon |
| | Sept 12 | Noon |
| Historical | July 25 | 6:30 p.m. |
| | Aug 22 | 6:30 p.m. |
| | Sept 26 | 6:30 p.m. |
| Parks & Rec | July 19 | 7:00 p.m. |
| | Aug 16 | 7:00 p.m. |
| | Sept 20 | 7:00 p.m. |